

Staff Memorandum



To: Mayor A. Nuttall and Members of Council

Subject and Ward(s): Changes to Notifications for Planning Act Applications
All Wards

Date: February 5, 2025

Executive Management Approval: M. Banfield, RPP, Executive Director of Development Services

CAO Approval: M. Prowse, Chief Administrative Officer

The purpose of this Memorandum is to provide members of Council with an update concerning changes to the City's circulation and publication methods for public notices associated with *Planning Act* Applications.

Public notice requirements for Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments, Draft Plans of Subdivision, and Committee of Adjustment Applications are prescribed by the *Planning Act*. In this regard, notice shall be provided to the public in the following manners:

- a) By posting a notification sign on the subject property where it is visible from a public highway or other place to which the public has access; or,
- b) By personal service or mail to every landowner within 120 metres of the subject property for Official Plan Amendments, Zoning By-law Amendments and Draft Plans of Subdivision, and within 60 metres for Committee of Adjustment Applications; or,
- c) A publication in a newspaper or on the municipality's website.

The *Planning Act* requires municipalities to provide notice for the above-referenced applications using a minimum of one of the options identified in subsections 'a' through 'c' above.

Municipalities are also required to provide notice by mail, email or fax to every person or public body that has given the clerk of the municipality a written request for a notice. Additionally, municipalities are required to provide notice to Provincial ministries and upper-tier municipalities (if applicable), as well as applicable external agencies such as school boards, rail operators, utility and telecommunications companies, conservation authorities, and companies operating oil and/or natural gas pipelines.

The City's current method of circulating and publishing public notices for the above-referenced applications includes the installation of a notice sign on the subject property, a mail circulation to surrounding property owners, and a publication on the [Public Notices](#) webpage on the City's website. The City also provides notices via email to Provincial ministries, external agencies, and members of the public who register for neighbourhood

meetings, which occur prior to the submission of a formal *Planning Act* Application, or make a written request to Planning staff or the City Clerk.

Development Services is changing the City's circulation and publication methods for public notices associated with *Planning Act* Applications, effective **February 10, 2025**.

In this regard, the City will no longer be circulating public notices to surrounding property owners through the mail for the formal *Planning Act* applications referenced above. Instead, applicants will be required to install a notification sign on the subject property and the City will publish notices on the [Public Notices](#) webpage on the City's website, in accordance with the *Planning Act*. Notification signs and online notices will continue to include links to the City's [Development Projects](#) webpage where members of the public can view submission materials, key dates, and the contact information for the Planning file manager. Additionally, Planning staff will continue to circulate applications via email to applicable Provincial ministries and external agencies for review and comment. Members of the public who request notice or register for a neighbourhood meeting will also be provided notice via email. Through this change in process, the City will continue to exceed the minimum notification requirements of the *Planning Act*. Staff will continue to circulate Neighbourhood Meeting notices by mail to property owners within 240 metres of development proposals to ensure property owners are aware of upcoming development proposals that they may have an interest in.

It is important to note that the City has already undertaken this approach when circulating and publishing public notices for *Planning Act* Applications during the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) work stoppage in late 2024. The City used these notification methods for the duration of the work stoppage with attendance at public meetings and input from residents not being limited by the change in notification in accordance with the *Planning Act*.

Changes to the City's circulation and publication methods for public notices for *Planning Act* Applications will result in cost savings for the City. In 2024, the cost of mailing public notices for *Planning Act* applications was \$16,831.38. This figure only includes the postage costs associated with mailing the notices through Canada Post. The total cost of mailing public notices for *Planning Act* applications is higher when staff time and resources such as paper, envelopes, printer ink and wear and tear on City printing equipment are considered.

When providing notice through the mail, the circulation radius for *Planning Act* applications ranges from 60 to 120 metres depending on the application type, and 240 metres for Neighbourhood Meetings. This generally results in large mailing lists, especially in the City's built-up areas. As a result, significant staff time and resources are required to send public notices through the mail when this is not required to give notice in accordance with the *Planning Act*. Given the volume of *Planning Act* applications the City receives on an annual basis, the cost of staff time and resources should not be understated.

This change to the City's notification process for *Planning Act* Applications represents a cost savings to City by reducing the staff time and resources required to send notices through the mail. Additionally, this change will allow staff time to be used more effectively, thereby improving City operations. Many other Ontario municipalities provide notice in a similar manner and use other notification options other than mail.

Questions regarding the change to the notification process for *Planning Act* Applications may be directed to Carlissa McLaren, Manager of Planning at 705-739-4220 extension 4719 or via email at carlissa.mclaren@barrie.ca.

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N/A

Pending # (if applicable):

N/A